

USPS Report on PRC Inquiries February 2022

The Postal Regulatory Commission referred 16 inquiries to the Postal Service in February 2022. Customers received responses on average within 5 days.

Inquiries covered various topics that fell into two main categories:

- Delivery Services 9— i.e., time of delivery, tracking inquiries
- Customer Service 5 — i.e., Hours of service, Collection Boxes, Indemnity Claims
- Policies/procedures and International Inquiries 2 i.e., – Policy Related

While many of the inquiries were customer specific, the following topic are highlighted for possible interest to a larger audience.

USPS Complete Environmental Review of Next Generation Delivery Vehicle Program, Proceeds with Next Steps

- *Through the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV) program, U.S. Postal Service commitment to the fiscally responsible roll-out of electric-powered vehicles for America's largest and oldest federal fleet remains ambitious and on schedule*
- *The NGDV program, which delivers its first 5,000 battery electric vehicles (BEV) beginning in 2023, provides significant environmental benefits through the introduction of safer and more environmentally friendly vehicles*
- *The flexibility in the NGDV program allows for an increase in the mix of BEVs should additional funding become available*
- *Postal Service carefully reviewed and incorporated feedback from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding the NGDV program's potential environmental impacts, detailed in the USPS 340-page Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)*
- *USPS concludes there is no legal or other basis to delay the NGDV program*

The U.S. Postal Service announced it has completed its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, which, in this instance, evaluated the potential environmental impacts of the Postal Service's Next Generation Vehicle Delivery (NGDV) program, a fiscally and environmentally responsible plan to modernize the federal government's largest and oldest vehicle fleet. The Postal Service communicated its completion of the NEPA process in a record of decision (ROD) filed with the Federal Register today.

"As we have reiterated throughout this process, our commitment to an electric fleet remains ambitious given the pressing vehicle and safety needs of our aging fleet as well as our fragile financial condition.

As our financial position improves with the ongoing implementation of our 10-year plan, Delivering for America, we will continue to pursue the acquisition of additional BEV as additional funding – from either internal or congressional sources - becomes available,” said Postmaster General and USPS Chief Executive Officer Louis DeJoy. “But the process needs to keep moving forward. The men and women of the U.S. Postal Service have waited long enough for safer, cleaner vehicles to fulfill on our universal service obligation to deliver to 161 million addresses in all climates and topographies six days per-week.”

The ROD details USPS’s response to feedback recently received from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about the Postal Service’s assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the NGDV program, which calls for the introduction of an initial 5,000 battery electric vehicles (BEV) to USPS’s fleet beginning in 2023. The Postal Service’s assessment is detailed in a 340-page Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), which was published under the NEPA process on Jan. 7, 2022.

“We thank the federal agencies, including the EPA, for their input,” said Mark Guilfoil, Vice President for Supply Management at the U.S. Postal Service. “The NEPA process attracted more than 39,000 public comments from an array of stakeholders; involved coordination with various federal agencies, including EPA. As a result of those comments we included extensions in the process timeline as requested by EPA. After thorough review and study we determined that EPA’s request for a supplemental EIS and public hearing would not add value to the Postal Service’s already year-long review. It is also important to note that a supplemental EIS and public hearing are not legally required.”

As noted in the ROD filed today, the NGDV program provides for the introduction of internal-combustion and electric-powered, purpose-built vehicles that deliver significant reductions in vehicle emissions and improvements in fuel economy versus the existing delivery vehicle fleet. While the current NGDV plan calls for its fleet mix to be at least 10 percent BEV, the Postal Service in its ROD recognizes a 100 percent mix of BEVs would deliver even greater emission benefits, and notes the program is designed to increase the mix of BEVs as financial resources become available.

The search for replacement vehicles for the Postal Service’s delivery fleet, which started in 2015, resulted in the purpose-built NGDVs that will deliver air conditioning and heating, improved ergonomics, and some of the most advanced vehicle and safety technology — including 360-degree cameras, advanced braking and traction control, air bags, a front-and rear-collision avoidance system that includes visual, audio warning, and automatic braking. The vehicles will also have increased cargo capacity to maximize efficiency and better accommodate higher mail and package volumes.

Over the past year, the Postal Service has made its teams available to policymakers in Congress, as they pursued efforts to secure funding to achieve a majority electric USPS delivery vehicle fleet over the next 10 years. Although congressional funding levels have varied, the Postal Service most recently discussed an ability to achieve 70 percent fleet electrification within a decade. The NGDV contract is an indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract, meaning the Postal Service will have the ongoing ability to order more NGDVs over a fixed period of time, in this case 10 years. In addition, the NGDV contract enables the flexibility needed to significantly increase the level of electrification when funding is provided, even after an order is placed.